

When a student struggles, the whole family struggles, but when a student is successful, the family, community and State all benefit from this success! So, how can we ensure that every student in Montana has an opportunity for success?

Approving the Educational Savings account will utilize tax money already allotted for education to be used for alternative education. This bill will financially provide parents access to the type of educational resources their children need to be successful in this competitive society, when public schools cannot.

The past seven years have demonstrated to me public education's lack of resources, training and even the understanding necessary, to address the particular academic needs for children, who, like my son, are Aspergers-smart but have substantial difficulty with sustained focus and organization.

Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch is a great program that is partnering with the public schools of Montana to offer in-class support, however, a student's parents must be poor enough for the child to qualify.

Wouldn't you agree that every child deserves access to a quality education, regardless of social standing?

As a mother I am also my child's educator. I know him. I believe in him - when other have not. When my boy was little, I read to him about Thomas Edison, when he was a boy himself, and how he also was attention deficit, and how his frustrated teacher actually boxed his ears! I feel like my son's ears have been boxed - emotionally. Just think where we ALL might be if Thomas Edison's mother hadn't removed Young Edison from school to educate him herself when he wasn't receiving the type of instruction he needed to use his ADD characteristic to his advantage in engaging his Asperger's mind??

Children are individuals with **different styles of learning** which at times require **different approaches to education**. We must put aside short-sighted interests of lobbyists that have nothing to do with the real needs of students or even the teachers.

Let us imagine instead, a future where alternative schools come alongside public schools, taking on some of the burden and the privilege of teaching Montana's children !

See with new eyes this opportunity to pro-actively stand together to ensure that every child in Montana has an **equal share and usage of our educational tax dollars** - so that everyone can receive a good education, and not simply be drug along year after year, never fully reaching their true potential.

The Educational savings account is all about empowering families to choose an appropriate educational plan that fits with their children's particular needs while lifting the financial burden of doing so. We are willing to do whatever it takes - even stand before the Montana legislature - to achieve a healthy future for our children.

However you vote, it will have a **compacting effect** in **countless lives** for years to come. If we fail them today, what will become of their future? What will become of our future? what

Thank you for your time in hearing me.

Susan Duczek